

**Fernando Galván, Julio Cañero Serrano, and José Santiago Fernández Vázquez, eds. 2003: *(Mis)representations: Intersections of Culture and Power*. Bern: Peter Lang. 296 pp.**

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The expansion of cultural studies as a scholarly pursuit and as a subject in higher education institutions can only be described as spectacular if we consider its development in certain geographical areas, despite the fact that these significantly continue to be mostly Anglophone. The disputed European or American (British or US) origins of cultural studies have been traced back as far as the 1950s, but it was in the closing decades of the 20th century that most associations, centres and university degrees were established. Even a brief look at listings such as that offered by the website of the international Association of Cultural Studies (<http://www.cultstud.org/links.htm>) shows that “Cultural Studies” is primarily an Anglo-American category, officially recognised in Britain, the USA, and Australia, as well as in a number of Northern European and Asian locations related to “English Studies” (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Shanghai). This scene is relevant to the volume under review, which is part of a series that publishes selected papers from annual conferences held in Spain and Portugal under the topic “Culture and Power.”

The field of Cultural Studies is far from univocal, and its methodology and pursuits have been adapted over the years, but most descriptions coincide in stating its interdisciplinary (trans- or even antidisciplinary) methodology, its analysis of the contemporary, everyday world and of the relations between cultural practices and power, together with its explicit aim of social change. They also freely acknowledge its grounding in disciplines such as English, sociology, geography or ethnology, and in interdisciplinary fields like women’s studies, postcolonial theory or communication. It is not our aim here to engage in a discussion of the rich internal debates or the external difficulties faced by the project within a discipline-dominated academy. Many of these debates and difficulties are parallel to those in gender studies, postcolonial theory and other interdisciplinary, transformative projects of intervention. But the success story of Cultural Studies at research and educational levels is clearly reflected in its many widely-disseminated publications, whether original volumes of those who have inevitably become icons (Hall, Bhabha, Ang, Gilroy and others), collective books on specific contexts (Frow and Morris 1994; Munns and Rajan 1995, among the many), introductory and discussion volumes (du Gay et al 1997; Giles and Middleton 1999; Jordan and Weedon 1995; McRobbie 2005; Morley and Chen 1996) or the by now numerous readers (During 1999; Grossberg et al. 1996; Storey 1996), which bring together key concepts and works in this wide-ranging interdisciplinary field.

The evolution of readers and textbooks may serve as a certain signposting of changes: for instance, the second (1999) edition of Simon During’s critical collection, first published in 1993, was marketed as incorporating the “new areas” of “technology and science, globalization or postcolonialism,” and includes Gayatri Spivak, Angela McRobbie, and Donna Haraway. A recent addition to this growing industry is *The Latin American Cultural Studies Reader* (del Sarto et al. 2004), which contextualizes the themes and methods of Latin American cultural studies as compared to its British and US counterparts, and includes essays by Néstor García Canclini, Debra Castillo, Jean Franco, Ángel Rama,

Walter Mignolo, Nelly Richard and Roberto Fernández Retamar. Although a significant number of these names are connected to the USA, where the book was produced, the publication itself signals a widening field, despite its hegemonic use of the English language and the Anglo-American market, one of the dilemmas for non-Anglophone cultural studies practitioners (Pina 2005; Jordan 2005).<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that the theorists mentioned above are frequently quoted and discussed by researchers in other fields, for, however reluctant the rigidly disciplinary administrative structures of the academy, disciplines are, *de facto*, becoming more and more interdisciplinary. The practices of English Studies, even in countries tightly organised under disciplinary boundaries, are a good example: in Spain itself, the panel structure of AEDEAN conferences and the publication policy of *Atlantis* display abundant trans-disciplinarity and border-crossing, albeit after lengthy discussion and heated opposition from some quarters.

In this context, it is not surprising that despite the Iberian origin of the volume, most of the essays contained in *(Mis)representations*, fall within what might be termed “English” rather “Spanish and Portuguese” studies. The publication may in fact offer a case study for the strengths and weaknesses of “national” and individual practices within cultural studies, although I do not consider this the most relevant perspective; its main value lies in the strength of the best contributions.

As stated in the introduction, the volume is the result of the VII International Seminar on Culture and Power, celebrated at the University of Alcalá in October 2001, which saw the foundation of the Iberian Association for Cultural Studies (IBACS) after six previous conferences and publications.<sup>2</sup> As is the case with most volumes emanating from a conference, this one is heterogeneous in themes, approach and academic breadth. The essays are linked by the conference topic of (mis)representation and by the (very broadly interpreted) Cultural Studies perspective, as well as by the presence of the concept of power, which runs through the successive meetings. Questions of (mis)representation have occupied much contemporary theory and political action, and constitute a key area in Cultural Studies and in all politically informed perspectives; the term is widely applicable and interpretable, and therefore allows great variety in topic and approach. This may well be one of the book’s strengths, although some readers might prefer more thematically or theoretically focussed volumes. However, as compilations of essays tend to be read mostly in sections, with readers guided by their own research or personal interests, there is much here to attract scholars of English, Cultural Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Education or

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1. The selection of readers and introductory or critical volumes mentioned is not exhaustive, given the variety in existence. Routledge has traditionally been the main publisher in cultural studies, and its catalogue contains many crucial titles, but has been joined by others. Among them, Blackwell publishes a very sound thematic series, *KeyWorks in Cultural Studies*, and Oxford UP has produced a series of area-centred volumes mainly for the USA market, which, aside from monographs on Russian, German, and Eastern European Cultural Studies (compiled from the US in English), includes one of the two “Spanish cultural studies” readers in the US market (Graham and Labanyi 1995; Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 2000). Some of the debates within IBACS on the related matters of Anglophone bias can be found on the association’s webpage.

2. The Association has continued to grow and to support Cultural Studies in the Iberian Peninsula and celebrates its eleventh event in 2005.

Translation. The interdisciplinary nature of the field also makes the reading of the full volume an enriching experience for those who might usually work from a more restricted disciplinary stance.

The contributions are organized into five sections whose titles draw attention to the major perspectives in the book, as well as the related fields of enquiry: "General Issues," "(Mis)Representation in the (Post)Colonial Context," "(Mis)Representing Class, Gender, and Sexuality," "(Mis)Representing Race and Ethnicity," and "(Mis)Representation in the Educational Context"; an "Annotated Bibliography" closes the book.

The first of these sections opens with J. Manuel Estévez Saá's very general introduction to the recent development of anthropological approaches to literature, and the significance of the relationship between both disciplines for Cultural Studies. The essay has the virtue of going beyond the Anglophone world, especially to Latin America, for some of the theory, but it is mostly descriptive, sometimes juxtaposing quotes from highly derivative sources with others by crucial theorists, and will be more useful to beginners in the subject than as critical engagement or problematizing of the (mis)uses of either field. Jürgen Schlaeger's "Mis-Representing the City" is an engaging account of recent books on the city of London, particularly Peter Ackroyd's *London: The Biography* (2000) and Iain Sinclair's *Lights Out for the Territory* (1997), although delving into Patrick Wright's *A Journey Through Ruins* (1991), Geoff Nicholson's *Bleeding London* (1997) and a number of recent related texts dealing with the English metropolis. The recognition of the unrepresentability of the city, which characterizes the major texts under analysis, is shown to be in standing with the current postmodern context and in contrast with official efforts to define (or [mis]represent) London in Millennium projects. The turn of the century seems to have produced an extensive literature on the subject, and one can only wonder how Schlaeger's essay would be modified by more racialised and gendered writings of London which have appeared since or are not dealt with here (many are discussed in McLeod 2004 and Procter 2003).

Section 2 brings together four essays centred on postcolonial contexts, mainly India and Ireland. Felicity Hand describes the ideological atmosphere that led to the Amritsar Massacre in the Punjab (1919), showing how the Raj's representation of Indians as an inferior race was not only crucial for the action taken, but also for its lack of reporting in the British press until nine months after the event. Her critical analysis contrasts the press coverage and reception in India and Britain, touching also on the silence surrounding this episode in English literature as compared to the wide coverage of the Indian Mutiny. Likewise moving between the Indian subcontinent and the West, Dora Sales Salvador's contribution studies Vikram Chandra's *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* (1995) as a text that "embodies a true poetics of the threshold" (60) and makes efficient use of postcolonial theory and cultural translation theory (mostly through Venuti 1992 and Venuti 1995) to analyse the liminality of the text in terms of structure, characters and linguistic use. Chandra's own awareness of the "ever-elusive completeness of representation (70)" (so close to that of Schlaeger's London authors) results here in a bridging narrative where "any form could coexist with any other," and, in Sales's view, functions as a symbol of the contemporary world. The first part of Jonathan Sell's essay "The Olive, the Arquebus, and the Lion," names three of the "landscape" elements present in a rhetorical tradition which, according to the author's detailed textual reading, is all too frequently overlooked in the mimetic-political readings of sixteenth-century colonial literature, with rather misleading

results in interpretation. By reading the topos of *locus amoenus*, Sell argues that it is possible to discern when culture as aesthetic heterocosm asserts itself over politics, and conversely, when despite—or within—rhetoric, colonial reality intrudes in the form of landscape elements whose presence would have been fully recognised as violent by sixteenth-century readers. He does so by referring to texts by Spenser, Harriot and, fundamentally, to Barlowe's tales of Virginia. The section closes with Graham K. Gregor and Encarna Vidal's analysis of Brian Friel's 1980 play *Translations*, and its relationship to the historical context (the great Ordnance Survey of Ireland in the 1820s and 30s, which anglicized place-names). Questions of national identity are analysed under Seamus Deane's notions of *territory*, *soil*, and *land* (Deane 1995), while the conclusions employ Michael Cronin's concept of the internal (cultural and linguistic) "translatedness" of Ireland (Cronin 1996), especially with regard to readings of Friel's characters.

The third section of the book explores questions of class, gender and sexuality. Melania Terrazas's contribution is an opinionated and passionate justification of Wyndham Lewis's portrayal of the working class in *The Vulgar Streak*, embodied in the profascist Vincent. It shows knowledge of the author's work and ideas and of his critics, but the argumentation is weakened by its failure to substantiate claims by quoting or referring readers to sources, and by a rather confusing use of inverted commas, which does not always make clear whether we are dealing with quoted, questioned, or highlighted terms. Nevertheless, the essay raises legitimate questions on how we read ambiguously moral characters and their implications for the perceived ideology of a text.

In a very different perspective on social class, Cristina Sánchez Carretero analyses the uses to which the city of Philadelphia (and its tourists) put the figure of Rocky Balboa, the fictional hero of the successive and successful *Rocky* films, whose image inhabits the city, from statues to posters, from exclusive foreign-businessmen-only guided tours to tourist performances and photos on the stairs of the Museum of Art (from which Rocky jumped in one of the films). Sánchez Carretero meditates on the appeal of an Italian-American working-class hero as embodiment of the American Dream, on the fragile myth of a classless American society, and on the intersection between mass media, popular culture, performance, tourism, and class. Visual representation and contrasting sources are also the subject of Camila Loew's "Miss Represented: Women at War Propaganda vs. Autobiographical Writing," one of the (surprisingly few) contributions dealing with gender. The passive, voyeuristic, non-combatant role assigned to women in propaganda posters during WWI, WWII and the Spanish Civil War, is contrasted with the images conveyed by two auto/biographical texts, Ellen LaMotte's *The Backwash of War* (1916) and, more at length, *Not so Quiet ...* (1930) by Helen Zenna Smith, pen name of Evadne Price. Both are based on the direct experience of women in war, as nurse and ambulance driver respectively, and show women in active intervention, inverting the stereotypical male/female dichotomy by becoming the protectors of helpless men on the battlefield. However, this recontextualization of war narrative, the author argues, takes place in a medium whose sphere of impact (readers, mostly women) cannot compare with that of the visual poster, more generalised and aggressive, and part of a genre reproduced in successive wars. Ana García Arroyo closes this section with "Same-Sex Love in India: Images from Ancient, Medieval and Modern Texts," which, starting from the immediate effects of the British Empire's introduction of legal criminalization of homosexuality in India (1861), disproves the popular view that homosexual relations are a Western import by referring

to the classic texts of the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Panchatantra*, the *Puranas*, and more recent Rekhti poetry. Thadani's *Sakhiyani: Lesbian Desire in Ancient and Modern India* and Vanita and Kidwai's collection *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*, seem fundamental and perhaps too exclusive sources for this essay (the latter also being too close in title), but it is to the author's credit that the data and argumentation taken from the books are acknowledged in detail.

Francisco A. Lomelí's "Remapping the Post-Barrio: Beyond Turf and Graffiti" opens section 4, on race and ethnicity, one of the strongest in the book, with four of the five essays dealing with Hispanic communities in the USA. Lomelí offers an expert's analysis of the renewed meanings of "barrioization" in Chicano literature, first explaining the conceptualization of the *barrio* since the 1970s, with its double-edged implications of nationhood, to then focus on two nineties texts, Luis J. Rodríguez's *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in LA* (1993), and Yxta Maya Murray's *Locas* (1997). Rodríguez's mixture of *testimonio*, picaresque and exemplary tale, in his autobiographical account of exclusion and outlaw life, shows, according to Lomelí, "a Chicano path of knowledge" (152). Murray's *Locas* challenges patriarchal *barrio* order through the contrasting first-person narratives of Lucía and Cecilia, initiated into a male (and macho) gang, but leaving to become, respectively, the powerful leader of a female gang and to drop out of a subservient role in male gangsterism. Lomelí demonstrates the transformation of space effected by the characters, the powerful metaphor of their "post-graffiti" language (146), and the texts' creation of a "a meta-barrio framed with contemporary narrative strategies." Also on Chicano writing, Julio Cañero Serrano's "Politics of 'Chingando': Chicano Political Misrepresentation in *Heart of Aztlán* and *Albuquerque*," situates Rudolfo Anaya's two novels in the context of the internal colonization of Chicanos in the US, and analyses the way in which his characters correspond to types and choices of four historical periods of Chicano political participation, as described by analysts Rodney Hero and Mario Barrera. Thus, he identifies the early *patrones*, the *vendidos* or "tokens," the later leaders of the Chicano Movement, and the end of the century practitioners of *realpolitik*, to show the persistence of the Anglo majority in denying Chicanos real political representation while advocating equality and multiculturalism. This very contradiction is one of the many highlighted by the extraordinary performances of Mexican artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña, whose complexity María Antonia Oliver-Rotger manages to convey effectively in her essay. Situating Gómez-Peña's alternative representational strategies in the context of co-existing "Latino Boom and Latino Backlash," Oliver-Rotger dissects the subversive tactics by which he destabilizes Anglo projections of the Latino Other, as well as more general questions of nationalism and linguistic protectionism, ethnic authenticity, and an obsolete multicultural paradigm, coopted by the idealistic discourses of *mestizaje* and hybridity which his often disturbing performances prove chimerical.

Chicano literature also figures, although not exclusively, in Carmen Flys's analysis of ethnic detective writing within the American "hard-boiled tradition." The essay argues convincingly that ethnic detective fiction makes use of a popular genre for emancipatory purposes and even for cultural mediation. Taking the detectives created by African Americans Walter Mosley and Barbara Neely, the Chicanos Rudolfo Anaya and Lucha Corpi, and the Choctaw-Cherokee Louis Owens, she follows their trajectories in their respective series to show alterations of the dominant American (white male) hard-boiled formula: these are detectives with strong communal ties, and they evolve in the series,

mostly towards stronger involvement, recognition or knowledge of their communities. Flys also highlights the centrality of storytelling in this project, linked to an orality and a vernacular language ever-present in the novels. As in the case of Rocky iconicity, the dominant, individualistic ethos of the US is challenged by popular ethnic culture. The final piece in this section, Chris Weedon's "Putting the Record Straight: Representing the Black Experience in Post-War Britain," begins with a clear and powerful account of racist attitudes (and the main episodes of these) in Britain after WWII, to set the scene for a discussion of the literature reflecting the actual experience of migrants and second generation British citizens in this setting. Referring to writers from Sam Selvon in the 50s (by now an over-discussed classic of the theme) to Caryl Phillips, David Dabydeen and Joan Riley in the 80s, as well as to a restricted few of the more recent writers (Lucinda Roy and Diran Adebayo), she defends historically grounded fiction as "a powerful tool in the evocation of the past" (211), which engages emotions and empathy, and serves to remedy the selective amnesia of the British vis-à-vis racism in the postwar period and the previous colonial era.

Section 5, on the educational context, deals with misrepresentations in textbooks, images of teachers, educational policies and interviewing. María Dueñas offers the results of a study of ten English-language textbooks at intermediate level, showing that, in their habit of avoiding controversial issues and (perhaps because of target age-groups, not discussed) of using mainly popular culture and leisure subjects, they trivialise and misrepresent cultures, rarely showing the ethnic, geographic or linguistic diversity found in the real English-speaking world. If these results may seem relatively predictable, they still constitute a serious warning of the urgent need for change in teaching a language which is mostly an international lingua franca and, even as a first language, spreads across many nationalities, ethnic groups and linguistic varieties. The results seem less surprising (although equally damaging) when we move on to Mercedes Bengoechea's effective analysis of the official papers related to the British National Curriculum in English in the Thatcherite 80s, centred specifically on the monolingual ideology which these official texts exude. Her essay describes the underlying struggle between the perspectives of monolingualism-assimilation on one hand, and cultural pluralism-linguistic diversity on the other, exposing the exclusion politics practised not only by Britain, but also by the European Community, which defines "protectable" languages from a territorial-cultural (European) basis that excludes those of immigrants.

Unquestioned assumptions about language and communication are also proved a subtle source of cultural discrimination in the case discussed by Celia Roberts in "Language Ideologies in Institutional Life: Turning Talk into Misrepresentation," which transcribes the results of a study of "gate-keeping interviews," and in particular that of a Spanish doctor aspiring to become a member of the Royal College of General Practitioners. Roberts demonstrates how the pressure of the language ideology of the interviewers creates failures in judgement and representation of the candidate, and how gatekeeping interviews may lead to social exclusion. The fourth and final essay in this section, Edia Cristina Pinho's "Princes and Frogs in the Land of Broken Promises: (Mis)Representations and Teachers," examines the ways in which socially ingrained idealised or negative representations of teachers produce unrealistic expectations and hinder the practitioners' own definition of the profession. Embracing Henry Giroux's concept of pedagogy as cultural democracy, of teaching as reflexive knowledge producing empowerment, she argues the need for

rewriting the representation of teachers, and for a better professional context where teachers are not weighed down by management, time or student numbers, and not impeded, like Mr. Keating of *Dead Poets' Society*, by imposed social and institutional norms. We may not subscribe to her reading of the film, but her plea for a different pedagogy is timely.

The book closes with a section in which David Walton, president of IBACS, reviews seven recent books which he finds relevant for cultural studies scholarship and teaching. The themes and authors are diverse: Rebecca Arnold writing on fashion, Eleanor Byrne and Martin McQuillan on Disney, Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean on American Cultural Studies, Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts on witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland, Sadie Plant on writing on drugs, Mary F. Rogers on Barbie culture, Peter Townsend on jazz. As in any selection, the choices and omissions may be questioned, but the reviews are theorised and informed, clearly expressed, and give a reliable idea of contents together with just enough personal opinion.

As a whole, this is a book with much to offer in its variety of topics and approaches. Its organization makes the most of a varied collection and comes with a clear introduction briefly mapping its contents. Although some essays could be more tightly theorised, and should acknowledge previous studies of their subject made in other fields, many are also excellent in this respect, and all contribute to the full effect of the book. I personally missed a "Notes on contributors" section and a subject index, but the pressures of editing, which seem to fall almost entirely on academics, no doubt account for these absences. The volume would have benefited from stricter editing in terms of English, typos and (occasionally) content, but the general standard is high, and the inclusive methodology of publishing from conferences makes it difficult to offer an evenly theorized and finished product. All in all, the volume is well worth reading for the variety of topics and perspectives, as well as for the common features: a contextualized analysis of culture (often literature, and in English, but not exclusively so), a demythologizing of structures of power and, in most cases, a choice of subject which in itself challenges established authorities.

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